

Crazy, Just Crazy by Hopping Mad - Chrissy

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Summary: So I've been doing a rewatch of Stranger Things Season One. I'm clearly a big Jopper fan, so of course my thoughts ran along the lines of... why on earth did they not hook up after going through so much together? Why did Joyce end up with Bob? So here is my take.

1. Chapter 1

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Author: Hopping Mad - Chrissy

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Chapter One

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Joyce splashed cold water on her face and risked a look in the bathroom mirror. She hadn't left the hospital since she and Hopper had rescued Will from the upside down four days ago, and it was beginning to show. She was looking ghostly with dark bags under her eyes. Jonathan, bless his heart - had brought her fresh clothes to change into, but there wasn't a lot she could do about the oily hair or unhealthy sheen to her face. She didn't think it would be humanly possible to leave Will's room anyway, after all she was currently standing in the bathroom attached to his room. He had told her to go home, to get some rest - but the cot the nurses had brought in for her was good enough for now. She would only go home when Will did.

She would have plenty of time to recover once they returned home. She wasn't going to have a lot of money, but she was sure she could scrounge together some healthy meals and squeeze in some extra sleep before returning to Melvald's.

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Jonathan swung by the station before heading home to start the cleanup. He wanted the house to be back in order before Will came home, and it didn't seem he would be able to tear his mom away from the boy's bedside to give him a hand. He didn't want to ask Nancy, he didn't want to go near her right now. She had chosen to take comfort in Steve's arms, and it made his heart ache. He wanted

to be the one to hold her, to help her recover from their week from hell. He shook his head, clearing thoughts of Nancy from his mind. There was a time and place to agonize over the whole "Nancy thing" as he had dubbed it, and now wasn't it.

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Hopper had only just sat down and lit his cigarette when Jonathan Byers walked into his office. The young man looked world-weary and pale. He waved the boy into the chair across from him with a grunt.

"What can I do for you?" He hoped his voice didn't sound as tired as he felt.

"I was just... Will is coming home tomorrow."

"That's great news, how is your mom holding up?" He had wanted to visit but didn't feel like he should intrude. He wasn't entirely sure Joyce wanted him around - now that Will had been found.

"She's... well she's happy. She won't leave the hospital."

"I bet," he sighed heavily.

"You could visit her, you know?" Jonathan pressed his lips together. "She's pretty lonely, I think some adult company would do her well." Hopper closed his eyes.

He and Joyce had been together in the latter years of school, and then slept together more than once when they had both been between relationships - but he didn't want to burden her with his company right now. They had a very strange friendship, one he wasn't even sure he could label as such. Once upon a time, before he left Hawkin's - he had been in love with the woman, but he had broken her heart on more than one occasion by making the stupid decisions, as a teenage boy is wont to do. He figured the time spent with her in the past week was due to necessity, rather than friendship.

"She probably doesn't want to see me," he shrugged. Jonathan looked as though he wanted to say more, but kept his mouth shut.

"I'm going home to get the house in order." Hopper chuckled at this, remembering the state of the Byers house.

"Oh boy, that's a job and a half. Do you want a hand?"

"That would be great." Jonathan looked relieved. He and Hopper were both similar in that they didn't have very many friends, preferred their own company. He needed the solitude more and more as he got older. Jonathan probably didn't have anyone else to ask for help.

"Let's get someone to come in and repair the wall, I'll call around and swing by after I've found someone."

"Sounds good. I don't even know what to do about the burnt carpet either, pull it up I guess. Not sure if the floor boards are gone too... or...?"

"We will find a way, don't worry." He waved towards the door. "I'll see you soon."

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Hopper and Jonathan sat on the veranda, each with a beer in hand. It had certainly not been easy getting the house ready for Joyce and Will's return, but thankfully once they had lifted the carpet in the hallway and cleaned the floorboards beneath some of the smell had dissipated. The lights were all boxed up and put in the shed, and the house looked as it had before Will went missing. He had even picked up milk, bread and eggs on his way over, knowing that she wouldn't have even thought of buying food in the past week.

"Thanks, heaps your help, and for the food. I guess it's pretty obvious we don't really have the money for repairs." Jonathan gestured to the boarded-up hole in the wall. "Lonnie boarding up the wall must be the first thing he's ever done to the house." He laughed bitterly. "I'm sure he had an ulterior motive to being here, he was horrible to Will. He called him a fag, even to his face."

"Joyce told me." Hopper felt his temper rising. "Good thing I didn't bump into him while he was in town." He felt his hand curling into a

fist of its own accord. He hated Lonnie with his entire being. Joyce had deserved so much better, that prick had broken her down and turned the whole town against her. It was hard to convince even his coworkers that Joyce didn't deserve to be known as the crazy, two steps from the edge mom living in the broken-down house with her two kids. There was so much more to Joyce than they could ever know, and it pissed him right off.

"I'm glad you helped her, you always end up saving the day." Jonathan sighed. "Sometimes I wish she had chosen you, not Lonnie."

"Has she... told you about us?" He frowned, he couldn't picture Joyce talking about relationships with her son.

"Nah, I saw some photos. I just guessed."

"Ah," he really didn't want to talk about this. "Well, good luck for tomorrow. Tell Will and your mom I say Hi." He tossed the can into the recycling bin on his way back to his truck and didn't bother looking back. He sometimes wished the same thing that Jonathan had just voiced, that somehow he and Joyce had worked out – and Lonnie had never laid a hand on her.

TBC.

2. Chapter 2

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Chapter Two

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Two weeks after Will returns home.

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Joyce paced the lounge her thoughts flitting from one thing to the next. She had been wanting to invite Hopper over to dinner to say thank you, but pride kept getting in the way. Jonathan had admitted Hopper had helped him fix up the house, and just yesterday a builder had arrived to fix the hole between the lounge and veranda. She had explained to the man she had no money to pay him, but apparently Hopper had already paid him. She needed to thank him, for so much. Saving Will, holding her together, fixing her house... did the list ever end really?

She hated that being a solo mum with a useless ex-husband and a shitty job meant she couldn't even afford repairs to her own house. It somehow stung more that it was *him* that paid the builder. She couldn't explain their relationship at all. She loved him, figured she always would. They had been friends from grade school, lovers in the latter years of school... that is until he up and left Hawkins. It was then Lonnie sidled up and offered her the love and stability she desperately wanted. All lies of course. Jim had always told her he was bad news, and she wondered if a part of her chose Lonnie just because she knew it would make him angry when the news reached his ears.

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After she kicked Lonnie out, she had slipped over to Jim Hopper's cabin, and the look on his face was priceless. She flopped down on her couch, remembering the look on his face...

(("What on earth are you doing here?" Hopper looked behind her, as if expecting there to be someone else here. "It's the middle of the damn night, Joyce."

"I kicked him out,"

"For good?"

"For good." She confirmed.

"Come inside, it's freezing."

She didn't give him time to even open his mouth to speak again before she was on him. She wound her arms around his neck, the familiar smell of him enveloping her and making her heart sing. It didn't matter if she couldn't have him always - sometimes she just needed her fill. She just needed Jim Hopper.))

She felt herself blush at the memories, and realized she had an alternate reason for wanting to invite him over for dinner. She wanted to see if there was still a chance, for just another night of solace with him. After all she had been through in the past few weeks, surely, he would need the release too? That is, if he hadn't found another woman to screw in the meantime. She buried her face in her hands. Before Lonnie she wouldn't have even questioned herself, but she was getting old and the other day she had found a grey hair. Hopper might not even be attracted to her anymore. He could find someone younger, prettier, less crazy, less burdened.

The knock at the door made her leap to her feet in fright, she had been so lost in her thoughts she hadn't even heard a car approach the house. She took a moment, hand over heart, to control her breathing.

"I'm coming," she called as the knocking continued. She opened the door to find Jim Hopper on her doorstep. *Shit.* "Uh, hey Hopper." She opened the door wider to let him in and found she couldn't meet his

eyes.

"I just thought I'd pop by and see how you are doing." He was already in her fridge, reaching for a beer before he paused. "Uh, this alright?" He held up a can.

"Of course," she stammered out. "We are fine." She told him, her voice a little stronger.

"Then why are you shaking?" He put the beer down, a concerned expression on his face. "Joyce?" He moved closer and she found herself taking a step back.

"I should have thanked you for paying for our wall to be repaired. I'm sorry." She hung her head, knowing her face was going pink with shame. "I hate that..."

"Hey, hey." This time when he moved in closer she stayed put. "Joyce, look at me." She slowly raised her eyes to meet his. "It's a gift, call it all the Christmas and Birthday gifts I always forgot to buy." He smirked. "Including that Birthday when I told you *I* was your birthday present." She tried to laugh, it had been funny... but the sound got caught in her throat and turned into a sob.

"I'm sorry," she mumbled and before she knew what was happening she had thrown herself into his arms.

"You have nothing to be sorry for." He gently kissed the top of her head, and suddenly her courage came back.

"Hop," she looked up into his eyes for a moment before continuing. "I *need* you."

"Uh... I'm right here."

"C'mon Hop, you know what I mean." She pulled herself up on her tip toes, but he still had to bend to meet her lips. He did so without hesitating, after all, it had never been awkward between them. She was sure he had known what she wanted from the moment he entered her house.

"Ah fuck, we have to stop doing this." He scooped her up into his

arms and carried her into her bedroom, she beginning to unbutton his shirt before they even reached the bed.

"I don't think we do,"

"It's not healthy." She placed a hand over his mouth and stared into his eyes.

"Shut up and *fuck* me." She saw a flicker of humor in his eyes.

"Well, if you insist."

"I insist." She removed her hand and replaced it with her lips.

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She awoke to find herself laying on Hopper and he was giving her a lazy smile. She returned it and kissed his chest where she could reach.

"Thank you, for everything." She told him.

"Best thank you *ever*." He chuckled. "You just let me know any time you want to thank me again, yeah?"

"I always do, don't I?"

"One day we are going to have to have a serious talk about this." He told her, brows drawn together in worry.

"Not yet," she slid up his naked body and kissed him on the lips. "One day, but not yet." She repeated.

TBC.

3. Chapter 3

Title: Crazy, just crazy.

Author: Hopping Mad - Chrissy

Authors Note: Ugh, I'm so sick. I hope I haven't ruined the story with this chapter!

Chapter Three

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Two months after Will comes home.

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Bob. Fucking BOB of all people. Why on earth had he thought it would be a good idea telling him to ask Joyce out? Bob the brain, that's what he was known as in school. He hated seeing them together.

"Hey Hop," he looked up to see a smiling Joyce waving at him from across the room.

"Hey," he responded with a quick wave. Where was he going anyway? Before he was so rudely distracted by seeing Joyce and Bob holding hands across the street? He couldn't even remember. Where was his truck? Best to just head there and figure it out on his way.

He wanted her to have a stable relationship with someone who could take care of her. He now had to put Eleven first, and between hiding her and keeping up with his appearance as Chief of the Police, there was no way he could continue supporting her as he had. In order to do so, he would have to reveal that he was hiding El in his cabin, and the last thing he wanted was to put Joyce or her family in danger again.

Ultimately, he let her go for her own safety. He had no good reason for being as angry as he felt about the whole situation. He took a few deep breaths as he opened his truck door and lit his cigarette, sitting down heavily in the driver's seat. It was funny how he felt so

protected being in the truck, but really everyone could see right through the windows. Good thing the town was used to seeing a grumpy Jim Hopper stomping around, no one would know his mood had anything to do with Joyce Byers.

If he really thought about it, Bob was a good choice for her. He was one of the kindest people he knew, and very intelligent. He also was well-off money wise, maybe he could help around the house. He would be a good stable man for the boys too. He would have to find a way to be happy for her. If he just found a way to hold onto the fact that for once Joyce had a wonderful, stable man in her life... not Lonnie fucking Byers, or a black hole like himself... maybe he could get through, get past the intense jealousy he felt towards any man in her bed.

The thought of Eleven drew his eyes to his watch and he decided it was late enough in the day he could go home. El would distract him, he had even found a new book for her. She wasn't the best at reading, but they must have taught her something at Hawkin's Lab. With any luck he could have her caught up and ready to be at school with her friends, that is if he could ever find a way for her to live safely in the public eye, but that was a problem to think on when he wasn't feeling quite so emotional. He wished he could speak to Joyce about it, she would know what to do.

Alas, he had made a decision that would protect the one he loved most – despite how terrible it made him feel to break her heart, again. He would just have to live with it.

The End.